

# WIKIPEDIA

# Steve Sisolak

**Stephen F. Sisolak** (born December 26, 1953) is an American businessman and politician serving as the 30th and current Governor of Nevada since 2019. A member of the Democratic Party, he previously chaired the Clark County Commission from 2013 to 2019.

After becoming involved in several civic causes and government projects, Sisolak won election to the Nevada Board of Regents and served from 1999 to 2008. In 2008, he won election to the Clark County Commission and was reelected in 2012 and 2016. In 2018, Sisolak won the Democratic nomination for Governor of Nevada, defeating Clark County Commission colleague Chris Giunchiglani in the primary election. On November 6, 2018, Sisolak defeated Republican nominee, Nevada Attorney General Adam Laxalt in the general election, becoming the first Democrat serving in the Nevada governorship since Bob Miller left office in 1999.

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## Early life

**Steve Sisolak**



**30th Governor of Nevada**

Incumbent

Assumed office  
January 7, 2019

Lieutenant Kate Marshall

Preceded by Brian Sandoval

Chair of the Clark County Commission

In office

January 7, 2013 – January 7, 2019

Preceded by Susan Brager

Succeeded by Marilyn Kirkpatrick

Vice Chair of the Clark County Commission

In office

January 3, 2011 – January 6, 2013

Preceded by Susan Brager

Succeeded by Larry Brown

Member of the Clark County Commission from district A

In office

January 5, 2009 – January 7, 2019

Preceded by Bruce Woodbury

Succeeded by Michael Naft

Sisolak was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the son of Mary, who worked at a convenience store and Edward Frank Sisolak (1925–2004), a project engineer for General Motors.<sup>[1][2]</sup> He is of Czech descent.<sup>[3]</sup>

Sisolak earned a B.S. in business from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee in 1974, and an M.B.A. from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in 1978. Both of his daughters attended UNLV.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Career

Sisolak is a successful entrepreneur, and was a partner in the American Distributing Company, a venture that sells coffee cups, pens, and other promotional items to businesses, as well as holding a partnership in a second company, Associated Industries.<sup>[5]</sup>

He began his involvement in elected office by winning a seat on the Nevada Board of Regents in 1998, where he served for 10 years. He was then elected to the Clark County Commission, with his term beginning in 2009.<sup>[4]</sup> He was elected by his peers as Chair of the Clark County Commission in January 2013.<sup>[6]</sup>

## Nevada Board of Regents

During his time on the Board of Regents, Sisolak discovered that thousands of Nevada students had been wrongly charged out-of-state tuition and won refunds for these students.<sup>[7]</sup>

In 2002, Sisolak sided with students and voted against a 16% tuition increase.<sup>[8]</sup> Sisolak voted against student fee hikes in 2003<sup>[9]</sup> and 2008.<sup>[10]</sup>

Sisolak fought to bring back a popular apprenticeship program at the College of Southern Nevada that has been abruptly canceled during the recession.<sup>[11]</sup>

## Clark County Commission

After joining the commission in 2009, Sisolak was "vehemently opposed to raising property taxes"<sup>[12]</sup> and property tax rates remained flat during his entire tenure on the commission.<sup>[13]</sup> Sisolak voted against increasing the county gas tax in 2013.<sup>[14]</sup> He served as the commission's vice chairman<sup>[15]</sup> before becoming chairman in 2013.<sup>[16]</sup>

Sisolak won praise from the conservative Nevada Policy Research Institute for fighting against waste, fraud, and abuse.<sup>[3]</sup> A spokesperson for the institute said, "His efforts to hold government accountable, especially the firefighters, and look closely at how tax money is being spent should be applauded."<sup>[3]</sup> Sisolak successfully pushed<sup>[17]</sup> the Water District to terminate a contract with Wolfgang Puck that was

### Member of the Nevada Board of Regents

from the 2nd district

In office

January 1, 1999 – December 31,

2008

Preceded by Maddy Graves

Succeeded by Theresa Malone

Constituency Subdistrict G

### Personal details

Born December 26, 1953

Milwaukee,  
Wisconsin, U.S.

Political party Democratic

Spouse(s) Dallas Garland  
(m. 1987; div. 2000)

Kathy Ong (m. 2018)

Children 2 (with Garland)

Residence Governor's Mansion  
(public)  
Spring Valley,  
Nevada, U.S.  
(private)

Education University of  
Wisconsin,  
Milwaukee (BS)  
University of  
Nevada, Las Vegas  
(MBA)

Website Government website  
(<http://gov.nv.gov>)

costing taxpayers \$600,000 per year.<sup>[18]</sup> During the recession, Sisolak was a vocal critic of overtime and sick leave abuse,<sup>[19]</sup> and his efforts resulted in over \$7 million in reduced overtime costs<sup>[20]</sup> and \$30 million in reduced disability costs.<sup>[21]</sup>

Sisolak successfully fought to cut the pay that Clark County Commissioners receive.<sup>[22]</sup>

Sisolak voted to refund \$4.1 million to 1,600 Laughlin property owners who had been overcharged assessment fees.<sup>[23]</sup>

Sisolak supported the "More Cops" initiative, which added 720 new officers to the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department,<sup>[24]</sup> and Republican Sheriff Joe Lombardo said that these additional police officers helped reduce violent crime 7% in 2018.<sup>[24]</sup>

Under Sisolak's chairmanship, Clark County opened The Harbor, an innovative juvenile justice resources center that operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and has prevented 3,000 youths from entering the criminal justice system.<sup>[25]</sup>

Sisolak supported bringing the Golden Knights<sup>[26]</sup> and Raiders to Las Vegas.<sup>[27]</sup> According to the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Sisolak was the "driving force" behind getting the Raiders to come to Las Vegas.<sup>[28]</sup>

In addition to the county commission, Sisolak's other government involvement includes vice president and board of directors member for the Las Vegas Valley Water District and board of directors member for the Southern Nevada Water Authority. He has also served as a member of the Colorado River Commission of Nevada, and vice chair of the board of commissioners for the University Medical Center Of Southern Nevada.<sup>[29]</sup>

Sisolak is involved with many civic, charitable and business organizations, including the Henderson Chamber of Commerce, the American Red Cross-Clark County Chapter, the UNLV Alumni Association, Seniors United, American Red Cross Leadership Council, Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce, Las Vegas Better Business Bureau, the Boys & Girls Club, Hispanics in Politics, St. Joseph Husband of Mary Catholic Church, and the Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Governor of Nevada

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### Tenure

On January 7, 2019, Sisolak was sworn in as the 30th Governor of Nevada.<sup>[30]</sup>

On May 30, 2019, Sisolak vetoed a bill that proposed the adoption of National Popular Vote Interstate Compact in the presidential elections.<sup>[31]</sup>



Sisolak in February 2020

## Political campaigns

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1998

Sisolak first won election as a member of the Nevada Board of Regents in November 1998.<sup>[5]</sup>

## 2008

Sisolak won a close race to replace out-going Republican Commissioner Bruce Woodbury in November 2008.<sup>[32]</sup>

## 2012

Sisolak won re-election as County Commissioner in November 2012, receiving the endorsement of the Las Vegas Review Journal<sup>[33]</sup> and Las Vegas Sun.<sup>[34]</sup>

## 2014

Sisolak had considered running for Governor of Nevada in 2014,<sup>[35]</sup> but declined in February 2014.<sup>[36][37]</sup>

## 2016

Sisolak won re-election as County Commissioner in November 2016.<sup>[38]</sup>

## 2018

Sisolak won the November 6, 2018, general election for Governor of Nevada, winning 49.4% of the vote to Republican Adam Laxalt's 45.3%.<sup>[39]</sup> Sisolak became the first Democratic governor elected since 1994.

Sisolak was long considered a potential candidate for Governor of Nevada in the 2018 election.<sup>[40]</sup> Sisolak officially announced his candidacy on June 22, 2017.<sup>[41]</sup> He defeated Clark County Commission colleague Chris Giunchigliani on June 12, 2018 to become the Democratic nominee for that office.<sup>[42]</sup> On Tuesday, November 6 he was elected Governor of Nevada. Although he lost all but two county-level jurisdictions, he carried the two largest, Clark and Washoe. He won primarily on the strength of carrying Clark County by 86,600 votes, more than double his statewide margin of 39,700 votes.<sup>[43]</sup>

Sisolak's campaign priorities were education, healthcare, and the economy.<sup>[44]</sup> He released a healthcare policy platform that included proposals to reduce pharmaceutical drug prices, fix Nevada's doctor shortage, and protect Nevadans with pre-existing conditions.<sup>[45]</sup> Sisolak said he wanted to continue Governor Sandoval's Medicaid expansion<sup>[46]</sup> and new funding for education. Sisolak supported Question 1, also known as Marsy's Law, the crime victims rights bill.<sup>[47]</sup> Sisolak opposed Question 3, the Energy Choice Initiative.<sup>[48]</sup>

He was endorsed by former President Barack Obama,<sup>[49]</sup> former Vice President Joe Biden,<sup>[50]</sup> Senator Catherine Cortez Masto, Representative Dina Titus,<sup>[51]</sup> the Sierra Club,<sup>[52]</sup> the Human Rights Campaign,<sup>[53]</sup> Let America Vote,<sup>[54]</sup> and the Law Enforcement Coalition of Nevada.<sup>[55]</sup>

## Personal life

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Sisolak married in the late 1980s and had two daughters with his wife, Lori "Dallas" Garland. Sisolak and Garland later divorced. Sisolak dated Kathleen Boutin Vermillion, who at the time of her relationship with Sisolak was a Henderson city councilwoman.<sup>[3]</sup> Shortly after winning the 2018 Nevada gubernatorial election, Sisolak announced his engagement to Kathy Ong, an Ely, Nevada native and girlfriend of five years.<sup>[56]</sup> On December 28, 2018, Sisolak announced his marriage to Ong.<sup>[57]</sup>

## 2005 lawsuit against McCarran Airport

Sisolak, a property owner on Las Vegas Boulevard South, received a total of \$23.5 million in 2005 after the airport refused to pay him for height restrictions imposed on a parcel he owned. McCarran officials had warned that paying off property owners who lost land value because of the height restrictions could cost more than \$1 billion and make air travel to or from Las Vegas more expensive. Still, the Nevada Supreme Court ruled that landowners can seek compensation if planes flying below 500 feet hinder their ability to develop high-rise buildings. Sisolak maintained that his land, acquired before Clark County imposed height restrictions, has been devalued and that he was entitled to compensation.<sup>[58][59]</sup>

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## External links

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- [Nevada Governor official webpage](http://gov.nv.gov/About/Governor-Steve-Sisolak/) (<http://gov.nv.gov/About/Governor-Steve-Sisolak/>)
- [Steve Sisolak for Governor campaign website](https://stevesisolak.com/) (<https://stevesisolak.com/>)
- [Steve Sisolak](https://curlie.org/Regional/North_America/United_States/Nevada/Society_and_Culture/Politics/Candidates_and_Campaigns/Governor/Steve_Sisolak) ([https://curlie.org/Regional/North\\_America/United\\_States/Nevada/Society\\_and\\_Culture/Politics/Candidates\\_and\\_Campaigns/Governor/Steve\\_Sisolak](https://curlie.org/Regional/North_America/United_States/Nevada/Society_and_Culture/Politics/Candidates_and_Campaigns/Governor/Steve_Sisolak)) at [Curlie](https://curlie.org)
- [Profile](https://www.votesmart.org/candidate/12492) (<https://www.votesmart.org/candidate/12492>) at [Vote Smart](https://www.votesmart.org)
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### Political offices

Preceded by <b>Bruce Woodbury</b>	<b>Member of the Clark County Commission from District A</b> 2009–2019	Succeeded by <b>Michael Naft</b>
Preceded by <b>Susan Brager</b>	<b>Vice Chair of the Clark County Commission</b> 2011–2013	Succeeded by <b>Larry Brown</b>
	<b>Chair of the Clark County Commission</b> 2013–2019	Succeeded by <b>Marilyn Kirkpatrick</b>
Preceded by <b>Brian Sandoval</b>	<b>Governor of Nevada</b> 2019–present	<b>Incumbent</b>

### Party political offices

Preceded by <b>Bob Goodman</b>	<b>Democratic nominee for Governor of Nevada</b> 2018	<b>Most recent</b>
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### U.S. order of precedence (ceremonial)

Preceded by <b>Mike Pence</b> <i>as Vice President</i>	<b>Order of Precedence of the United States</b> Within Nevada	Succeeded by <b>Mayor of city in which event is held</b>
		Succeeded by <b>Otherwise Nancy Pelosi</b> <i>as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives</i>
Preceded by <b>Jim Justice</b> <i>as Governor of West Virginia</i>	<b>Order of Precedence of the United States</b> Outside Nevada	Succeeded by <b>Pete Ricketts</b> <i>as Governor of Nebraska</i>

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